



## *From Robin's Pen*

### **Aging America**

In working on this month's article, I find myself getting ready to head off to Washington DC to attend the summer meeting of the American Public Human Services

Association (APHSA). APHSA represents state human services agencies and focuses on issues of welfare reform, child support, Medicaid, child welfare, child care, and many others. I always look forward to the national meetings – it's a chance for me to network with colleagues at the federal and state level, a time to learn new things, and a time to "brag" about the great things all of you are doing back here in Utah.

This coming meeting is even more exciting to me since the theme is "Aging America: Implications for Public Human Services." Our discussions will focus on the demographic fact that we are an aging society. Further, the clientele of all public human service agencies will change over the next 20 to 40 years as the "Baby Boom Generation" retires and we find ourselves with 25% of the American population being age 65 and over. If you read my article last month, you will remember that one of the human service fields that I am passionate about is Gerontology.

As a part of APHSA's meeting, I am presenting and moderating a panel discussion entitled, "Second Time Around: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren." In putting together my talking points, I reviewed some data that I thought might also be interesting to all of you and may get us

thinking about how we, here in Utah, should respond.

In 1997, 3.9 million children resided in grandparent-headed households, that's 5.5% of all children. This number is up from 2.2 million children in 1970. Over half of these children were under the age of six and 40% will stay over five years in the home of their grandparents. In about one third of these grandparent headed households, there is no parent of the child present; this family type has been labeled as "Skipped Generation Families." Why the increase? The answer involves many issues with which you are all too familiar. Among them are: increasing drug abuse rates, teen pregnancy, divorce, AIDS, crime and parental incarceration, child abuse and neglect, parental death, and mental illness of parents.

Now, the good news is grandparents are willing and able to step forward and care for their grandchildren. They provide a loving and nurturing environment for very vulnerable children. The bad news is, some are facing tremendous stresses and strains in doing so. Research has shown that these grandparent headed families face higher rates of poverty (27%) and experience higher rates of depression, poor physical health, and marital problems. These grandparents often face lack of insurance coverage for their grandchildren unless they are qualified for Medicaid. If they are qualified to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits (TANF), the amount of the grant is often much less than is needed. If they eligible under foster care programs as kinship placements, the benefits are often less than what non-kin foster parents receive and there remain major disincentives for these kin to assume custody and guardianship of their grandchildren.

Many advocacy organizations are recognizing this growing trend and are calling for action to institute better policy and supports. One such organization is Generations United – a coalition of organizations representing the needs of children and the elderly. Generations United is jointly sponsored by Child Welfare League of America,

American Association for Retired Persons, Children's Defense Fund, and National Council on Aging. There is growing support for policies and services in arenas such as financial support, legal support, medical care, child care, caregiver support, and respite. All of these avenues would benefit children, the elderly, and human service systems. I hope to come back with more ideas about how Utah should better support its children and elderly –



particularly those in grandparent headed households. If you have ideas, I would love to hear them as well. As I end this article, I am

glancing up at a picture I have on my office wall. It is a simple picture of the wrinkled hand of an elderly woman surrounded by the smooth hands of a child. It says so much to me. I am constantly reminded of what support and guidance can be provided across generations if only we seek it out and nurture it happening.

---

## YOUR GREAT IDEA COULD MEAN MONEY IN YOUR POCKET!

Dollars & Sense

During the past six months, some great money-saving suggestions have been submitted by employees from several DHS agencies. Several of the ideas were award-winning, meriting the monthly incentive award and publication in *The Human Touch*. Every idea submitted is reviewed by the Public Information Committee (PIC), which has representation from DHS agencies. Each idea is given consideration on the basis of demonstrable savings, potential for department-wide use, and original thinking. In case you haven't heard, the amount of the *Dollars and Sense* award has been increased to \$100 - a very nice incentive for ideas that could benefit everyone.

This is just a reminder that the money is still

available! You still have a chance to finance that luxury dinner with your "honey," or that special gift for someone - if your idea is a winner. Please E-Mail any *Dollars and Sense* ideas to Randy Ripplinger for consideration. As they say in the magazine sweepstakes promotions - "you could be the next winner," and for our award your chances are better than one in two hundred million!

---

## DHS EMPLOYEE RESPONDS TO OKLAHOMA TORNADO DISASTER

*Editor's note:* The following is a personal account from Jim Jennings, Office of Licensing, Price.

My brother-in-law in Colorado received information that help was needed with the clean up on the disaster from the Oklahoma tornado. He mentioned a possible trip during a family get together on Mothers Day and had two of his brothers-in-law respond and were interested in going. He also got two in-laws from the other side of the family to go.



Trash pile from what is left of a neighborhood. Several homes once stood along this road.

We met in Vernal, Utah on May 15 and stopped in Colorado to pick up a camp trailer and headed for Oklahoma. We arrived in Oklahoma on Sunday evening and reported to a disaster team in Tuttle, Oklahoma. The disaster office was based in an LDS church near the disaster site. It was neat to see the Baptist church, LDS Church, Red Cross and Salvation Army working together to coordinate where the help was needed most.

On Monday morning we were assigned to a work group with three other volunteers (8 total). We were assigned a small area around a pond

approximately one half acre in size to clean. It was an area where two people had been killed and found on the site. Houses did not exist. All that was left of the houses was the cement foundations and floors that were still in the ground. The area looked like someone had put several houses in a large blender and mixed everything up and then spat it out all over the ground. There was very little left that was salvageable.

When we first got to our assigned site we were standing and looking at the destruction and we were joking about how destroyed the cars were. We were trying to guess what kind of car was on the other side of the pond crumpled up in a ball. We guessed it was a small two door car like a Nissan Sentra or a Chevrolet Cavalier. When we found out that it was a full size Chevrolet suburban, we were a little shocked.

Three of us were able to stay for three days, and the other two family members stayed for the whole week. They had planned to stay until Saturday, but on Friday night someone broke a window out of their truck and stole checkbooks and other belongings. The county workers in the area donated enough gasoline for them to get home and others assisted in helping them find a window to put in their truck.



The hurricane stripped all leaves from trees.

We felt good about the amount of work that we accomplished while we were there but our efforts barely made a dent in the whole project.

Overall we had a positive learning experience from the trip.

## BREATHING EASY

by Lauri McCreary  
DHS Office of Administrative Support

If you have lived along the Wasatch Front for any length of time, you have experienced poor air quality on more than one occasion. The thick brown haze, the lack of visibility, the "If you suffer from respiratory



Lauri McCreary

difficulties, stay indoors today" warnings are all a part of living in a mountain valley. You may have asked yourself, "What can I do to reduce these conditions?" As a group of thousands of employees, we can do quite a bit.

Given the unique geography of the Wasatch Front (Weber, Davis, Salt Lake and Utah Counties) and the high percentage of personal vehicle use, maintaining good air quality is a challenge we all face. Vehicles account for impurities such as fine particulate, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, and nitrogen oxides. Stir that into the air shed on a given business day and we get brown-grey soup to breath!

The concoction not only *looks* bad, it's bad for you. The interaction of sunlight with these impurities creates ozone. High concentrations of ozone reduce lung function, lower resistance to colds, increase eye irritation, and cause damage to plants, rubber and fabrics.

Now, here's the rub for you: Any day you can avoid driving alone to work between 6-10 a.m. will reduce your vehicle's contribution to air impurities and health risks. That **does not** mean you must ride a bus every day. It does mean *anything* you do, even periodically, helps.

Riding the bus or car pooling or riding your bike just one or two days a week will make an impact on the improvement of air quality. In fact, if you ride the bus just 10 times a month you are eligible for a 90% reimbursement of the cost of the monthly bus pass. With employer approval, schedule shifting (working 6 a.m. - 3 p.m., for example) gets



you out of the rush hour and avoids the prime polluting hours. Some employees are able to combine schedule shifting *and* working four 10-hour days a week. Where approved, telecommuting from home keeps you off the road altogether.



If each employee were able to avoid the ride-alone hours of 6-10 a.m. just one day per week, we could reduce our part of the traffic congestion and pollution by 20%. What can you do to be part of the solution?

---

## THE CHRISTMAS BOX HOUSE

by Dianne Warner-Kearney  
Child Protection State Specialist

*The Christmas Box*, written by Richard Paul Evans, became an instant success and a best seller when it was published. Rick Evans wrote the story for his children in celebration of the holidays. When family and friends read the story, they convinced Rick to publish it and make it available to the general public. The success and popularity of *The Christmas Box* spurred Rick's interest in helping children who were victimized by abuse and neglect. He established Christmas Box House International with the goal of creating "Christmas Box Houses" worldwide to serve children who are abused and neglected.

The Christmas Box House is now a familiar concept to many DCFS staff who will soon have access to one in some of their communities. The Christmas Box House will serve as a safe haven and temporary shelter for a child who has experienced abuse or neglect, where the child can be thoroughly assessed by a professional team. The Christmas Box

House is designed to promote a warm nurturing environment for the child, that promotes the child's self-esteem. Each Christmas Box House will reflect the local community, so operating procedures may differ from one community to another. Rick is also hopeful that these centers will serve as resource centers for all parents in the community who will be able to obtain information and resources to enhance their ability to parent and nurture their children.

In most communities, the Christmas Box House will be operate as a shelter under the direction of DCFS. Moab, the first community to open a Christmas Box House has hired Bonnie Skilton as the Shelter Director. She has gotten the facility up and running and it is a beautiful focal point for kids and adults in the community.

In Salt Lake City, because the Division has contracted for shelter services with Salt Lake County, the Christmas Box House will be linked with the contract. The facility is under construction at 3660 S. West Temple in Salt Lake. Lindsey Wilner Rooney, who will be the director, estimates the opening some time in July 1999. The Christmas Box House will offer intake and assessment services to children up to age 18, as well as special residential services for children up to age 12. The facility will be open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day and provide temporary residential services for up to 36 children plus a crisis nursery for up to four infants. The current shelter located on South Main Street will no longer be used when the new Christmas Box House



Christmas Box House in Salt Lake City under construction

is opened. During the past few weeks a transition team has been working out details involved in the move, including establishing preliminary policies and procedures.

When the Christmas Box House is open,

DHS employees and any members of the community are welcome to drop by for a tour and to get acquainted.

---

## WHO IS WATCHING US ON THE WEB?

by Paul Seager, Office of Technology

Each month, there are approximately 40,115 visitors to the Utah Department of Human Service's web site. These visitors reside literally all over the world, spanning 72 countries and more than 50 US cities. The top ten most active countries, in order, include:

United States	Canada
Australia	United Kingdom
Japan	New Zealand
Singapore	Malaysia
Germany	South Africa

The most active states include:

Virginia	California
Utah	Minnesota
Georgia	New Jersey
New York	Texas
Massachusetts	Washington

The fact that America Online has a major hub in Virginia skews the data slightly. The majority of these users most likely are from Utah, not Virginia as the data might suggest.

Monthly visitors access over 102,090 web pages and download over 865 files. The most active day of the week is typically Tuesday, with Saturday being the least active. Visits occur more heavily during the 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM hour and the least during the inverse, 3:00 AM to 4:00 AM.

You may ask yourself what is it that these visitors are looking for? We have a glimpse of the answer. Since a high number of these visitors are employees of the Department, they access information on SAFE, computer training, policies and employee information. Those outside the Department are primarily interested in topics such as: adoption services, licensing procedures, child abuse prevention, substance abuse, and other agency specific services. The top ten search words that are used to locate our pages include: Child, Utah, abuse, services, welfare, protective, and family.

Finally, you might be interested to know that Netscape remains the browser of choice for those visiting our web site. Monthly Netscape users total 27,967, with Internet Explorer totaling only 8,720.

---

## NEW ON THE WEB

A new Web site particularly useful to clients has been created by the Office of Child Protection Ombudsman. OCPO accepts complaints from clients of the Division of Child and Family Services, investigates those client cases, and facilitates resolutions. The OCPO Web site is located at [www.hsocpo.state.ut.us](http://www.hsocpo.state.ut.us) The site guides visitors through questions such as "What can OCPO do for me?" and "What steps I should take before contacting OCPO."

---

## KUDOS

At a recent National Prevention Network (NPN) Annual Meeting it was announced that Sherry T. Young, former prevention coordinator for the Division of Substance Abuse, was the winner of the prestigious Ketty Award. The Ketty Award is named for Dr. Ketty Ray, one of the principal founders of the National Prevention Network. NPN is the organization for substance abuse prevention specialists and workers. Sherry, a longtime worker in the field of prevention, received the 1999 Award for her outstanding service to the field of prevention, and to the National Prevention Network.

---

## SICK LEAVE POLICY REVISED -RETIREMENT INCENTIVE-

**New Authorization to Assist Employees at Retirement** - As a retirement incentive, the Utah Legislature this past year authorized the use of unused sick leave to purchase medical insurance. Unused sick leave (before or after the cash out of 25%), and after the standard deduction of 480 hours, may be used to purchase additional insurance coverage for the employee and/or spouse. The coverage can be for health and life insurance to age

65, and/or for the Medicare Supplement after the employee is age 65. In the past, employees could purchase only the Low-Option Medicare Supplement with the unused sick leave, but now employees have the option of purchasing the High-Option Medicare Supplement too. The current cost for Low-Option Medicare Supplement is \$60.00, and High-Option Supplement is \$177.00 per month per person. The purchase rate is eight hours of unused sick leave for each month of coverage per person.

For more information on these options and specifics, look in the Human Resource Management Rules, Chapter 8, Working Conditions , Part 7, Leave., see your Human Resource Technician (payroll), or contact the Office of Human Resources at 538-4222.

---

## AUGUST 1999 DHS CALENDAR

**14 Utah Federation for Youth** Vocational Training, 801-538-9836

**27-28 Quality of Life Conference**, Provo Marriott, Sharon Yearsley, 538-4182

---

### Opening a Word 97 GroupWise Attachment Which Was Saved in WordPerfect Format

Tech Tip by Janice DeVore

There have been some questions about opening a Word 97 document which was saved in WordPerfect format. Even though the document has been saved in WordPerfect format, it will still have the **.doc** extension. Here are a couple of options:



1. After the user has saved the Word 97 document in the WordPerfect format, the user can then rename the document with the **.wpd** extension. The user will receive an error message "If you change a file name extension, the file may become unusable. Are you sure you want to change it?" Click **Yes**, and

the extension will now have the **.wpd** extension. The user can send both documents as attachments in GroupWise and will open to the appropriate application based on the extension.

2. If the user receiving the attachments with the **.doc** extension in GroupWise has the default action set in GroupWise to open the attachment based on the extension, then yes, both attachments-- the Word 97 document **and** the Word 97 document saved in a WordPerfect format-- will open in Word 97. To prevent this from happening, change the default action to **View attachment** instead of the default action of **Open Attachment**. Click on **Tools, Options, Environment**. Under the Default action section, click on the **View attachment** option button and click **OK**. Close out of the Options dialog box to return to the main GroupWise window. When the user views the attachment and wants to save the document, click on **File, Save as**. At that point in time, the user can change the extension to **.wpd**.

## The Human Touch

Published by the Utah Department of Human Services

**Robin Arnold-Williams**

**Executive Director**

Edited by Randy Ripplinger, 120 North 200 West, #319, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103. Articles or ideas welcome. Send e-mail, FAX 801/538-4016 or call 801/538-3991. Deadline is the 10th of the month. All articles subject to editing.

**WWW.DHS.STATE.UT.US**